ORAL HISTORY—

Robert L. Hagan

This is an interview conducted on February 26, 1997, with former Deputy Director and Acting Director, Robert L. Hagan [Acting Deputy Director, February to June 1972; Deputy Director, from June 1972 to May 1979; and Acting Director, from March 1973 to May 1973]. The interviewers were David M. Pemberton, Decennial Census Historian, and Michael L. Hovland, Economic Census Historian.

Pemberton: **We have managed to track your career, through the Key Personnel List in the decennial and economic histories that our office writes only as far back to your position as Assistant Division Chief in charge of Geographic Operations in Jeffersonville, in the late 1950s. What did you do prior to this position, and what led you to the Bureau?**

Hagan: As a depression era youngster, I received a private education in Catholic Schools through high school and college. I graduated from high school in 1941, and the war started later that year. I managed to finish my first year of college, and then I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force [Air Corps at that time] and went through pre-flight qualification training, but I "washed out" because of a physical condition due to my eyesight. So, I eventually ended up an infantry soldier in Europe. After the aviation cadet period, I waited to attend gunnery training school, but those schools were so crowded it took a long time. Meanwhile, I met an old college friend who convinced me to enter the Army Specialist Training Program. As a result, I spent the equivalent of a year at the University of Oklahoma studying acoustical and optical engineering. For a person who did not like mathematics, it was not the best place to be, but I managed to get through fine. Then the school closed and the Army needed lots of young college age kids in the fighting areas—so a whole group of us came together in an infantry division composed of people from Texas A & M, Oklahoma University, the University of New Mexico, and

from all over the southwestern portion of the United States. We went through World War II together and withstood front-line combat from October 1944 through May 1945. We formed some lasting friendships because we were basically a cohort group of college kids. I still keep in contact with a half-dozen or so from different parts of the country. That was a defining experience for me. When I left the Army, I had a semester and a half to finish my degree requirements. In order to do that, I was looking for a part-time job. At that time, it was not illegal or considered immoral for politicians to refer you to jobs. Since a friend of a relative was active in the Democratic Party, I was able to get a part-time job at the Census Bureau doing survey work. My first appointment was in July 1946 as an enumerator earning 87 cents an hour and 3 cents reimbursement per mile. I went from basically the bottom to the top and enjoyed a satisfying career. Over the years, I served in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18 (I skipped sixteen—there weren't any openings in that one and GS-10 seemed to be a nonentity in the Federal Government). My jobs ranged from serving as an ungraded enumerator to supervising on the early surveys. I remember doing a sawmill survey covering eight states in the Midwest. I had to hire a staff and travel those eight states. I guess I had a dozen interviewers spread from Canada to Texas and from the Eastern slopes of the Rockies to the Mississippi. Following that I was appointed district supervisor in charge of one of the 68 offices the Bureau had at that time. The configuration of the Bureau's field staff at that time was such that the office was centered in the counties that were part of the sample. So, you had 68 sample areas, 68 offices, and I think we had 6 regions. I remember my goal was to be a regional director and make that grand salary of $6,000 a year—the pay for a GS-12 at that time. Following that I had special assignments in the 1948 Business Census, training the temporary district managers that we hired. We had some interesting and capable people in those classes, including Orville Freeman, who later became Secretary of Agriculture and Governor of Minnesota; Carl Rolbage, later Governor of Minnesota; and Clyde Herring, who ran for governor of Iowa. This was illustrative of the kind of talent we recruited to manage these operations—basically young lawyers who were party activists. They were told by their political recruiters (the National Committee people) that, "there's a job you are going to take. You are going to take it as a duty, and as a result, we had some excellent people." Anyway, I did that during the 1948 census and then moved right into the 1950 Census of Population and Housing, supervising that activity from the Kansas City, Kansas District Office. I covered the equivalent of

a congressional district then. Following that, I joined the staff of the Kansas City Regional Office in Missouri, serving there in several different jobs—eventually being appointed the St. Louis Regional Director in 1957. In 1958, Bill Fay, then Chief of the Geography Division, recruited me to work for him. We had a fine working relationship during the 1954 Census of Agriculture and 1955 Economic Censuses. We were doing the geographic coding for the economic censuses—we worked well together. He hit me at the right moment, my family was growing, I had three children, and I was tired of traveling two thirds of the month.

Pemberton: **If I might interrupt a bit, going back to 1946, where did you begin your career at the Census Bureau?**

Hagan: Kansas City, Kansas.

Pemberton: **Was the bulk of your early career out of Kansas City?**

Hagan: I worked out of Kansas City until 1958. I was in and out on assignment, but I was headquartered in Kansas City. One other thing I did in the 1950 census which I found to be a good experience for me professionally was the Post Enumeration Survey for our six state regions. I worked with some very good people. Training for the enumeration job, recruiting staff, and trying to measure the undercount and the accuracy of the information that had been collected by the enumerators was very interesting and worth while to me.

Back to my career with the Geography Division—it began in 1958 with the initial plan being to move to Washington. I arrived in May or June looking for a house. I borrowed Bill Fay's car and spent a whole weekend driving around. I came back Monday and told Bill I thought I had found a place I wanted to live in. He told me not to get too attached to it because I was going someplace else. I asked where I was going, and he said Jeffersonville, IN. I had never heard of it and didn't know where in the heck it was, so we got on a plane and left for Jeffersonville. The space problem in the Washington area had precluded doing an expanded geographic preparatory project there. So, a decision was made to relocate the operation. There was an army quartermaster's facility closing in Jeffersonville, so the Bureau decided to go take a look at it. I know that Everett Burke, Administrative Service Chief, the personnel people, and others had been out there. The decision was already made, so I had to come to Washington by way of Jeffersonville. I opened the office there around the 4th of July. It was a funny feeling not having other Bureau people in Jeffersonville; I was it. There were people coming back and forth from Washington to assist me, but it was a lonely feeling. We took

some of the staff who had worked in the quartermaster's facility, mostly administrative people. The Geography Division in Washington provided about 10 or 12 technicians who were on duty there for 1 1/2 or 2 years. The big job was preparing the maps for the 1960 Census of Population and Housing. We moved into the parachute repair building; it was a decent building for the kind of work we had to do. The tables that had been used for parachute repair were big, long tables with lights under them. We used them for mapping. We made do with what we had, along with the addition of some new equipment.

Pemberton: **They served as light tables, essentially.**

Hagan: Yes.

Hovland: **And you prepared all the maps for the 1960 census in Jeffersonville?**

Hagan: Yes.

Pemberton: **How was that done? What were the base maps that you used?**

Hagan: For base maps, we used 3,000 county highway maps from the state highway departments, along with maps from city officials. We undertook a massive campaign to get maps from all the incorporated places in the United States.

Pemberton: **Was that campaign organized out of Jeffersonville or out of Washington?**

Hagan: It was organized out of Jeffersonville. If there was a map on file of an incorporated place, we made a copy of that and sent it along with an inquiry asking the town to review it, or provide us with changes. Probably the most difficult part of the whole process was making sure that we had all the changes that were supposed to be reflected on all those maps that went out April 1 with enumerators. Changes could have been made the last day of March; theoretically, the Bureau was responsible for incorporating those changes into the maps. It was a constant process of updating. Some cities were very stable, and others were annexing all the time. It's done differently in different states.

Pemberton: **It sounds like a very early version of what is now called the boundary and annexation survey.**

Hagan: That's it! Another difficulty we had as a result of the growth-rate of cities was that maps were inadequate in a lot of cases. When we had time, we used newer information to draft and verify newer maps. We also used aerial photos to prepare outline maps.

Pemberton: **Were the aerial photographs from the Army Corps of Engineers? Where would they come from?**

Hagan: The aerial photos were from many sources—geological surveys, private companies—whatever you could get a hold of.

Pemberton: **Does this mean you hired cartographers in Jeffersonville?**

Hagan: We either hired them or we trained them. One very supportive cartographer from Washington was George Morrison. He was a very knowledgeable person, and he stayed with me for most of the time I spent in Jeffersonville, helping me organize the mapping operation in terms of drafting techniques and camera works. We had a camera that was about 20 feet long that we assembled there to enlarge smaller maps. At a later date, these maps became the base for what later became known as the metropolitan map series.

Hovland: **There must have been a pretty frantic buildup on the staff out there from July 1958 to 1960?**

Hagan: There was. It was tough! It was hectic and satisfying. When you're young and a challenge is offered, you grab it. We survived. We weren't sure we would, but we did. All these late annexations had to go out as enumeration district splits. If your enumeration district was fixed as of January 1, you had to start the reproduction process and get all these maps into packages—tons and tons of material. Changes to the maps after we had finalized them had to be sent back to the field later as "splits." For example, an enumeration district that previously consisted of a county area now is half a city. In order to get the proper distribution of population, we had to have Field Division do a split. Then we had to feed those split codes back into the tabulation system. That was the origin and reason for the A and B suffixes on enumeration district numbers.

Pemberton: **At this time, did Jeffersonville report to the Geography Division?**

Hagan: Well, I did. We were a series of discrete units. Right after I setup Geography, the economic census people came in. Dr. Weiss [Assistant Division Chief, Industry Division], Van Olsen (who was the machine tabulation chief (key punch, etc.)), and others setup units, and we all reported back to our parent unit. Bob Krook [Robert D. Krook, Chief, Jeffersonville Census Operations Office, 1960s], the administrative head there handled personnel, services, payroll, and similar matters. He did not have and was not staffed to have technical control over every operation. That came later.

Pemberton: **From 1958 through 1960, was your hierarchical level assistant division chief?**

Hagan: Yes.

Pemberton: **So there would have been other assistant division chiefs responsible for machine tabulation and field operations?**

Hagan: Yes, the other operations had their own assistant division chiefs.

Pemberton: **Was there anyone on site to whom these persons reported to [on technical matters] and on administrative matters?**

Hagan: On administrative matters, you had responsibility to your local headquarters. That's how it operated then. I stayed in Jeffersonville until 1963 and then came to Washington as Assistant Division Chief of Geography Division. I left a small operation in Jeffersonville, but I take credit along with Bill Fay, for spawning the idea of the metropolitan map series. That is probably the most satisfying career achievement I had in the technical field. This is a copy of a memorandum written in May 1960 that describes this in greater detail. When that memo was written, we were going through the tough experience of preparing those maps for the 1960 Census of Population and Housing and getting them out to Field Division. We were obviously still trying to adjust the maps so we would get the most accurate tabulations that we could. I talked to Bill Fay about this, and I sat down and prepared that May 1960 memorandum and said, "we can't do this again." This was not the way to go about this job. We needed to have a uniform map base for metropolitan areas at least, and that was the seed which Bill pushed ahead to obtain money for developing this map series. With the help of good people at the top like, Joe Daley and Morris Hansen, they helped us get the project approved and funded. The idea for the metropolitan map series and its development was targeted for the 1970 Census of Population and Housing. So, from 1963 to 1969 we worked to that end with the U.S. Geological Survey. We were using their quadrangle maps as the base to develop a technique that involved getting photo materials from their latest update and then putting together these sheets to fit our pagination. Our layout for the metropolitan area didn't always match the quad maps, so we did it at a different scale. We did it at a scale we thought would be more useful for the enumerators. We used a little different technique that violated one of the sacrosanct rules of mapping at that time. Everything had to be a double line map so we could put the street name in the middle of it. Well, that took up a lot more space than we had to allocate, so we agreed to a single-line approach (which has now become pretty standard). We were able to

save as much space as possible for block numbers, and all the other identification that had to go on the map, including tract numbers and tract boundaries.

Pemberton: **Do you remember what the scale was for the metropolitan series versus the quads you used?**

Hagan: Not really. I think we went to one-to-a-thousand; I do not remember about the quads.

Hovland: **One-to-twenty four or -twenty-five thousand.**

Hagan: Probably.

Pemberton: **It should, or the idea of the quad; there were 4 of them, and that would make 1-to-100,000 and it would be on a large scale, I believe, for something that didn't have enough detail for the census.**

Hagan: Your right, all current corporate limits and street names weren't important to the U.S. Geological Survey. We selected what we needed versus what they needed for their purposes; that's how it evolved.

Pemberton: **Did the U.S. Geological Survey make any of the metropolitan map series that the Census Bureau developed or were the maps primarily made for census purposes?**

Hagan: Primarily for the Census Bureau. I think the U.S. Geological Survey eventually used some of the information we developed on boundaries. They were beginning to think about putting some political boundaries or additional boundaries on the maps.

Hovland: **Did the U.S. Geological Survey contribute anything aside from its own quad maps? Was there any support for the project?**

Hagan: Yes; it was influential in helping us get support when the Bureau needed it for funding, and the U.S. Geological Survey lent some professional credentials because it was recognized as the world's leading authority on mapping—topographic mapping. It gave the Census Bureau added credits. We had a working group composed of the Federal Highway Administration, Coast and Geodetic Survey, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Census Bureau. All of these participated in a series of technical meetings. They basically were giving us advice and help. It was a good period. That map series was used for the 1970 census. That's when I left the geographic activities of the Bureau. In 1969, the Bureau was looking for someone to manage the processing of the 1970 census. I think there were several of us on the hit-list, but everyone managed to escape but me. I ended up going; I seriously thought about quitting or appealing the reassignment. It was a lateral move, and my kids-

were still in school. Because a lot of work was done in Jeffersonville, I traveled back and forth to Jeffersonville from Bureau headquarters. I made 150 round trip flights to Louisville during that time period. I've had enough of Eastern Airlines to last me a lifetime.

Pemberton: **So the reassignment would have been from Suitland?**

Hagan: From Suitland to Jeffersonville to supervise the processing of the 1970 census. Actually the preparation work had already gotten underway, and my job was to get in there and hire the 3,000 people we used to process it, organize the effort, and complete the job. I was rather upset and bitter about it, but I had made a lot of good friends in Jeffersonville over the years.

Pemberton: **This would not have been part of Geography Division, at that point. What division would this have been?**

Hagan: I guess we called it Decennial Census Operations Division. I had a lot of interaction with fine people like Dave Kaplan [David L. Kaplan, Assistant Director for Demographic Censuses, from November 1974 to May 1979], Joe Daley [Joseph F. Daly, Associate Director, Research Development, from November 1968 to October 1971], and others. Dave and I were very close. So that was my assignment. Joe Arbena, who had been Assistant Division Chief in Governments Division, was head of the Jeffersonville unit when I went there. He had volunteered to go there. Joe and I got along fine. Eventually he retired and I was appointed head of the Jeffersonville Census Operations Division (which is what it was called) in late 1971 or early 1972. About that time there was an upheaval in Washington when Bob Drury [Robert F. Drury, Deputy Director, from July 1, 1967, to January 1, 1971] was eased out and Joe Wright [Joseph R. Wright Jr., Deputy Director, 1972] came in. I really wasn't involved in that end of it.

Pemberton: **I was going to ask you about your recollection. Was it a difficult time?**

Hagan: Yes, it was. Ross Eckler [A. Ross Eckler, Director from 1965 to 1969. Deputy Director, from 1949 to 1965] had already retired and George Brown [Dr. George Hay Brown, Director, from September 1969 to January 1973] was the Director.

Pemberton: **Did you have much interaction with either Dr. Eckler or Dr. Brown?**

Hagan: Ross Eckler, Oh, yes. I had worked with and for Ross. I served as Deputy Director under Dr. Brown [and Vincent Barabba]. I have a copy of an old Census Bulletin showing the many directors I worked under. I have underlined the directors I worked under. J.C. Capt [James Clyde Capt, Director, from 1941 to 1949] was probably the most political. Well, where were we?

Pemberton: **We were in late 1971 or early 1972; you were appointed to head the Jeffersonville operation.**

Hagan: At that time, Joe Wright was Deputy Director [from August 1971 to January 1972] and he came out to Jeffersonville to familiarize himself with the operation and begin to feel comfortable about being able to work together.

Pemberton: **Do you know where Mr. Wright came from?**

Hagan: Booz, Allen, and Hamilton I think or CitiCorp; he was with both of them at different times. Could have been either one. He was very sharp; anxious to get things done with a lot of nervous energy. Anyway we developed a relationship and Joe Wright recruited me, with Dr. Brown's concurrence. I came in not knowing whether I was going to stay or not. I think I started in February of 1972 [Acting Deputy Director from February 1972 to June 1972; Deputy Director from June 1972 to May 1979] and things didn't really settle down until 3 or 4 months later. I ended up being appointed Deputy Director (GS-17) because the Social and Economic Statistics Administration (SESA) [established January 1972 and abolished July 1975] showed its "ugly head." Joe Wright became Deputy Administrator of SESA, and I moved on to Deputy Director of the Bureau. George Brown was Director. Vince Barabba came in when Dr. Brown left.

Pemberton: **You must have made the acquaintance of a gentlemen named Bryant Benton about that time.**

Hagan: Bryant was with the Management Division at that time, and I recall that he ended up going to Jeffersonville. I forget the sequence of timing, but Bryant did go to Jeffersonville to fill the vacancy I had left. I think he was the one who succeeded me.

Pemberton: **Early in his career he was an assistant to Joe Wright.**

Hagan: Special assistant; I had forgotten that phase of it. He was working with Joe as special assistant; then he went to Jeffersonville and spent several years there.

Pemberton: **If I am not mistaken, you were a grade 15 when you were head of the Decennial Census Operation Division in Jeffersonville. Then Mr. Wright came in 1971 and became an understudy or was appointed Deputy or Acting Deputy.**

Hagan: Actually, Joe Wright was Deputy Director, and I forget what title I had. I have a lot of personnel change actions in my file.

Pemberton: **The reason I'm asking is because things are happening rather rapidly in this period, and I'm just trying to get straight what's happening when. It's also very unusual for an individual, in my experience, to jump from a GS-15 to a GS-17.**

Hagan: It sure is! Here is a little congratulatory note from Bob Krook, for whom I had worked in Jeffersonville back in the 1960s. Bob had come to Washington and was working with the Census Bureau's Field Division. In June 1972, I was transferred from Jeffersonville to Bureau headquarters as Deputy Director, with a jump from a grade 15 to 17. For quite awhile, the deputy director's job stayed at a GS-17 because Commerce had lifted the GS-18 and assigned it to SESA. Barabba was instrumental in getting the GS-18 back in January 1976.

Hovland: **That was about the time SESA went down the tubes, wasn't it?**

Hagan: Right! It certainly was interesting at that time trying to get SESA out of the way. Looking back some funny things happened. George Jaszi, Director of the Bureau of Economic Analysis, was an intelligent, refreshing, and a very outspoken person who spoke with a definite accent. George and I (I was Acting Director at the time) were backing up SESA at congressional hearings. At that time, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce was speaking for both of us in a budget hearing on Capital Hill. We were not permitted to testify for ourselves. The then Assistant Secretary/Administrator of SESA was testifying, and the regular Subcommittee Chairman was called out of the hearing. A substitute Representative took over and asked the questions. Well, they passed this deck of cards with questions (that's routine), and the Honorable Yvonne Burke, from California, began reading the cards. She was having some difficulty with some of the terms. She was at a disadvantage. The Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of Commerce, was trying to answer and was doing a poor job of it. He was really messing up. Despite all the briefings and everything else, he just didn't have the background; it wasn't really his fault. He was in an operation where he didn't belong; he should have had us act as the speakers. But they wanted George Jaszi and I in the back row. We sat there and George, in a very loud whisper said, "she doesn't know what she's asking, and he doesn't know what he's answering." I still remember that day; everybody turned around and looked at him. He gave them a look like, "what the hell!" He was obviously a world renowned economist and very competent of his own knowledge, and nobody could force him to back down.

Hovland: **I was interested in what you said about your relationship with Joe Wright. Wright has obtained sort of a mystic status in some parts of the Bureau and sort of the personification of a hatchet man.**

Hagan: Well, he could be that. I remember one time he wanted to get rid of one division chief, I won't mention his name because of the context. Jim Turbitt [James W. Turbitt, Associate Director for Administration from July 1974 to January 1979] and I laid our bodies down and said no (we regretted that later [laugh]). We were sorry we saved him. Joe Wright could be tough, but if you sat down and had a reasonable discussion with him, he also could be convinced. He did a few things that were, I guess, upsetting to some of the people in the Bureau. But some of the people he went after needed a kick.

Pemberton: **If you wish not to mention names that's fine but why was Mr. Wright trying to displace this individual or any other individual? What kind of things were happening that shouldn't have happened or what things weren't being done that should have been done?**

Hagan: Well, there was no question that this individual had been a very fine employee for a long time, but he slipped into habits that hindered his effectiveness in the division. It was unfortunate, but Jim Turbitt and I thought that things could be handled, and it turned out that it didn't work quite that way for us; you do make mistakes.

I was so very fortunate, and I think that Vince Barabba would have to agree—that he and I at that time probably had, if not the best, then one of the best executive staffs the Bureau ever had. I say that without reservation. This staff was professional, loyal, smart, and had integrity.

Pemberton: **You had Jim Turbitt, Dan Levine, Shirley Kallek, and Dave Kaplan.**

Hagan: Oh, yes we had a great group—here's a little rogues gallery of the group—myself, Jim Turbitt, Harold Nisselson [later Associate Director for Statistical Standards and Methodology, from October 1977 to February 1979], Dan Levine [Daniel B. Levine, Deputy Director, from May 1979 to January 1982], Ted Clemence [Theodore G. Clemence, Program Planning Officer, to July 1976], Mel Hendry [Melvin A. Hendry, Assistant Director for Economic and Agriculture Censuses, from December 1975 to October 1976], Shirley Kallek [Associate Director for Economic Fields, from 1974 to 1983], Walter Simonson [Walter E. Simonson, Associate Director for Information Technology, from August 1972 to May 1977], Curt Hill [Curtis T. Hill, Assistant Director, for Field Operations, from July 1979 to October 1979], and Alva Finkner [Associate Director for Statistical Standards, from 1972 to 1977].

That was a great team. Individually they were fine people. We happened to work together real well. Staff meetings were a pleasure. Every once in a while there would be a few sparks where interests would cross, but we resolved those. A fine group of people, if not the best. I was proud of having been instrumental in moving Shirley Kallek into the associate directors job.

Pemberton: **Mr. Levine mentioned in his interview that the Census Bureau was certainly in the forefront of having women in responsible positions. He mentioned a number of people, primarily on the demographic side because that was where he was. Certainly, Shirley Kallek was coming up on the economic side concurrently with that.**

Hovland: **Barbara Bailor [Associate Director for Statistical Standards and Methodolgy, from October 1979 to December 1987] came on very early too.**

Hagan: Way back, Helen Almond was Chief of Personnel Division when I came to work; a very capable person.

Pemberton: **Can you think of any reason the Bureau would have a leading role or certainly a significant role?**

Hagan: I think it's probably endemic to people who deal with statistics. It comes easier for them than it does for some others. I think it's easier to recognize if you are accustomed to analyzing numbers and trends. At least that's my view; I didn't have to convince people, that Shirley was associate director material.

Pemberton: **There was a very famous 1949 movie called "Gentlemen's Agreement" which dealt with anti-Semitism. The Census Bureau is known for not having been affected, particularly in the class of 1940 but other times as well.**

Hagan: Well, I think certainly as far as I'm concerned, there was no anti-Semitic attitude in place, and I would credit a large group of people for that—not the least of which would be Dr. Eckler, Morris Hansen [Associate Director for Research and Development], and people like that. Dave Kaplan came out of that class of forty. It was a large group. They were all smart and dedicated Bureau employees.

Pemberton: **Well, you were Deputy Director. We were in 1976.**

Hagan: And then Barabba left in 1976 I think. I believe September 1976, I don't have anything on that.

Pemberton: **That's O.K., we can deal with that, you became Acting Director.**

Hagan: Yes, we were awaiting the appointment of the new Director. I guess it was coincidental with the election of President Carter and the staffing of Commerce. Manny Plotkin came in as the new Director; Manny and I had a good relationship. He was a fine person; however, he was handicapped in dealing with the Department of Commerce.

Pemberton: **With his superiors at the Department of Commerce?**

Hagan: Yes.

Pemberton: **He came from Sears and Roebuck, didn't he?**

Hagan: Yes, he came from Sears, and he just didn't know how to deal with the political realities of some of the people at Commerce.

Pemberton: **And on Capital Hill as well?**

Hagan: He did reasonably well on the Hill with a couple of his contacts, but he was basically undone by Commerce and by his own "softness." Very sensitive, nice guy, and politcally naive in a sense. Jim Turbitt and I used to have lunch with him quite a bit and talk about relationships with Commerce—they were pretty rocky at that time, and they got rockier.

Pemberton: **In what sense, what kinds of difficulties? (This was after SESA had been abolished, and the new Democratic administration changed the leadership at the Department of Commerce.)**

Hagan: I'd say a bad combination of personalities and backgrounds at Commerce. You had an academic as Secretary, and you had various astute politicians as staff. You also had, as far as I'm concerned, an over graded, over promoted individual who tried to influence a lot of things at the Bureau. For example, there was an assistant secretary—I don't want to mention names that fell in this category (the little people are still around). But anyway, their idea of how to operate the department was to excessively intrude into the Census Bureau's operations.

Pemberton: **Were these administrators more involved with the Census Bureau's operations than the Bureau of Economic Analysis, or did the administrators try to meddle with both agencies?**

Hagan: They might have tried, but George Jaszi was still there; he probably told them to go fly, maybe not quite that blunt. We weren't in a position to do that. I was the Deputy Director and Manny Plotkin was too new and too nice. We tried to back him

up. Before we could get around to that, the Department of Commerce had made up its mind to get rid of him. They made his life so miserable that he left.

Pemberton: **More or less voluntarily or was he fired?**

Hagan: He was actually told, but they do allow you a little dignity.

Hovland: **No more then they can spare.**

Hagan: That's right! So he departed, and then I became acting director again. The department was scrounging around to find out who they could select to become its next director. Before they made up their mind, I told them I was leaving. There is some interesting history that I have dug out of a National Journal article in which I underlined some sections. Meanwhile the Civil Service reorganization was proceeding. Converting jobs from GS (General Schedule) to SES (Senior Executive Service) and there is some other stuff on the back, that's the AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees)—the union newsletter expressing their interest. I had a personnel difference of opinion—Commerce was going to have the deputy directors job classified as SES General, I think. I'm not sure about the right term, there were two different classifications possible, one was reserved and the other was general. Reserved meaning it was held for career people, and you couldn't arbitrarily be sent to The Bureau of Waste Water or something. General meant you could be reassigned arbitrarily. At that time, they had classified the deputy director's job as general, meaning I could be railroaded. For that reason I bowed out. I just didn't want to stick around and work with those people under those conditions. That's why I left rather abruptly.

Pemberton: **A number of other people left roughly at the same time.**

Hagan: Yes, Jim Turbitt and I walked out together, and Dave Kaplan had already left; Dave was getting weary, and he may have been dealing with health problems. It certainly was the working relationship that contributed to our decisions.

Pemberton: **And Hal Nisselson as well.**

Hagan: Yes. That was very distasteful, very distasteful. The whole staff, at least the top staff; Shirley, Dave, Dan, Jim, and I met with Pat Cadell [see below for identity] one night to try and head off Commerce; he was a friend of Vince's, and we had met him. And Pat had been a strong person in the Democrat Party.

Hovland: **Pat Cadell had been a pollster hadn't he?**

Hagan: Yes, a pollster for Carter.

Hovland: **You met him on an unofficial visit, or did he have an official position then?**

Hagan: He didn't have any official position, but we knew that he was close to President Carter.

Pemberton: **And he knew Barabba because of the fact that they were both involved in the same business but on different sides politically.**

Hagan: Pat was a sharp guy, interesting, and willing to listen. We were so upset with the Department of Commerce. So I called Pat and said do you have time to listen to us. We had real problems at Commerce at that time. I could be right, I could be wrong, but in my own opinion, Pat was instrumental in getting Barabba to agree to come back as Director. For the "second coming" of Barabba, I would credit Pat Cadell. He convinced the Department of Commerce that they should do it. He told people to shut-up and let it happen, and he got a hold of Vince and convinced him to come back.

Hovland: **I know that at the time, Barabba's return had an astonishing affect on the Bureau.**

Hagan: Here's a memo from one of the staff down at the Department of Commerce. She was a career employee and head of the correspondence unit. Yea, it was quite a time; Pat Cadell was a good friend of the Bureau behind the scenes. He didn't want to see the Bureau wrecked by Commerce. The memo is typical of what was happening at Commerce.

Pemberton: **You probably had, from your description, at least one and maybe more mentors as you were coming along. Would you talk a little about whoever those people may have been?**

Hagan: Way back, I worked for a regional director with a lot of rough edges; a fellow by the name of Ray Riley [Ray C. Riley, Assistant Supervisor, Salt Lake City, Utah—1950 census], who had came over from Works Progress Administration (WPA), which is where the Current Population Survey originated. A lot of our district people, who worked on managing some of the offices, were former WPA people. They were with that survey when it was part of the WPA. He was a good mentor in a sense that he took no nonsense on the part of your work for the Bureau. The Bureau was all encompassing. It was your life. I would travel, as I mentioned on some of those surveys [lumber survey], from Oklahoma to Canada or the Dakotas/Minnesota. Before you found the "damn" saw mills, you were back in the woods. It was a rough life. I would come back by train because you had to get

special permission to fly. In order to fly, you had to get a special travel order cut. I traveled by train, by Pullman, and I would leave there on Friday from Duluth or Fargo, or wherever, and I would head back to Kansas City, getting in Saturday morning on the overnight sleeper. I'd go pick up my laundry and go by the office to see Ray Riley. I was single then of course. Ray Reilly would hand me tickets to get on the train Sunday night. I put up with some pretty rugged basic training under a hard-nose guy like that. He played poker just as hard as he directed the Bureau.

Pemberton: **So you socialized with him also?**

Hagan: Oh, yes. You couldn't get away from him. Your life belonged to him. He was typical of the early breed. Some were a little more polished. He had was an engineer by profession.

Pemberton: **That reminds me, you also were an engineer weren't you? What is your training?**

Hagan: I finally got my degrees in economics. I could have gotten them in mathematics or engineering with a different focus. When I first began college, I was a pre-med student—I was going to be a dentist. After I got out of the Army, 3 1/2 years later, I said that's going to take too damn long. Meanwhile I had a lot of math, physics, all kinds of engineering, and meteorology from the Air Force and the Army. I could have ended up getting a degree in one of those, but I decided to get off the fastest way I could and that was to get a BA in economics. I left college with 168 non-focused credit hours.

Pemberton: **I interrupted myself, we were talking about mentors, but I wanted to get that on the record too. After Mr. Reilly?**

Hagan: After Ray Riley, I would have to credit Jack Robertson [Jack D. Robertson, Chief, Field Division, from 1952 to 1955] and Bob Voight [Robert B. Voight, Chief, Data User Services Division, from January 1972 to December 1979]. In my early career they were key. After that it would be Bill Fay. Bill was a tough task-master. He took no nonsense in terms of your ability to communicate and to write short, cogent, understandable text. He was totally loyal to the Bureau. I give Bill Fay a big part of the credit. Then in between I had a lot of good coaching from Joe Daley, Dave Kaplan, Morris Hansen (to a lesser degree, I didn't have as much contact with Morris), Joe Wright, and I guess towards the end I would have to give Vince Barabba credit.

Pemberton: **You didn't talk much about when you were Deputy Director and Mr. Barabba was in his first tenure as Director. How did you two divide the labor?**

Hagan: It was funny, well, we tried to help Vince. I discovered, working with Joe Wright and Dr. George Brown, that one of the most important and difficult jobs for the Deputy Director, or any top career official in an organization with a political boss, is being able to guide that politicians energy and also keep him out of trouble— which means being able to say no and not alienate or cause problems. The directors I worked under came from a broadly different background—Vince ran his own company; Plotkin came from Sears; Dr. George Brown was in charge of marketing at Ford Motor Company. When these people came to the Bureau, working for the Federal Government was new to them. They had there own ideas, and they had a lot of energy. They wanted to do many things. Some of the things they wanted to do was illegal, unwise, or too expensive. Therefore, the Deputy Directors responsibility is to channel that energy and work with the Director to permit him to concentrate on three or four objectives that he has a keen interest in—something he would like to do and get him the funding and technical support. That's how I remember working with Vince. He had a lot of good and big ideas. Some were too big for the Bureau; some were impractical. Vince used to tease us. We would have staff meetings, and we would do our work on the budget. Dave Kaplan would have his millions and Shirley Kallek had her millions. We would make decisions and then talk to Vince about something he wanted to do. He would say: "you have all the millions of dollars allocated; what do I get—$50,000." It's that kind of relationship that has to evolve to be effective. Vince had his agenda, most of which we fully supported.

Pemberton: **You mentioned you tried to direct a director into three or four "do-able" projects. Do any of Barabba's projects stand out in your mind?**

Hagan: Vince was really gung-ho on data-user developments. He wanted to make information more broadly available, more focused. Meanwhile, later on, of course, he got into the disagreements that went on with the Department of Commerce and SESA. The coordination of the Bureau's role with other statistical agencies was something he did very well.

Pemberton: **Both domestic and foreign?**

Hagan: More domestic, very little foreign, as I remember.

Pemberton: **The Bureau of Economic Affairs (BEA) and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)?**

Hagan: Yes. BEA and the BLS in particular. We had good relationships with Julius Shiskin and then after he left, Janet Norwood [both former commissioners of BEA]. We had bi-monthly luncheon meetings to keep the communications open. Meanwhile, Dan Levine was doing constant missionary work with them.

Pemberton: **In his interview, Barabba called it huckstering. He was still making strong presentations to acquire business surveys for the Bureau.**

Hagan: Shirley Kallek used to chafe a little bit under that. Dan Levine had so many outside clients that he had more funding flexibility. Shirley's was all internal to the Bureau's budget, and this gave rise to a little friendly exchange once in a while.

Another thing, I wouldn't call Ted Clemence a mentor in the sense you would use it, but I would call him a very useful colleague. I brought Ted into the staff meetings and at first I got a little flack from others. They said, "he doesn't belong here," but Joe Wright had started that with Bryan Benton; therefore, I didn't feel bad about using Ted. Ted was a straight thinking, analyst. He provided a different perspective from what the rest of us had, being on the firing line, trying to decide about programs or policies or whatever. Ted was a great confidant. He wrote me a wonderful letter after I retired which I cherish. He was probably the best known executive staff member in terms of helping me understand my job. He was also a great communicator with the Department of Commerce on policy issues and legal questions.

Pemberton: **Now this was when Ted was head of the Policy Development Office?**

Hagan: Ted was invaluable to me.

Pemberton: **Sherry Courtland would have been his assistant?**

Hagan: Yes, Sherry was there. I value Ted as a very valuable associate, whom I would have missed very much.

Pemberton: **Ted also played a helpful role to the History Staff.**

Hovland: **Yes indeed! Ted was very supportive of the History Staff.**

Pemberton: **Which at times is very helpful to the staff.**

Hagan: Here is a little bit of philosophy that you may enjoy reading yourselves. I have had it since I was a young employee, and it somehow puts things in perspective.

Pemberton: **This will give us something to read on the return to the office. So, for an example, Vince Barabba took the kind of direction that you were able to provide, maybe direction is not the right word. Channeling, helping to—**

Hagan: He would accept our counseling and pick and choose, and we would work it out.

Pemberton: **Where as Mr. Plotkin didn't have that—**

Hagan: He didn't have the vision that Vince Barabba had.

Pemberton: **He walked into a difficult time. We are talking about a 1976 test census that took place in Travis County, Texas. After which a county wide sweep by the Immigration and Naturalization Service was conducted to identify, pick up, and deport illegal aliens. We are asking about this because our Director, Dr. Riche, will be meeting with her counterpart at the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) next week. She's asked the History Staff and a number of other staff people to find out what we can about the kind of difficulties did it caused the Census Bureau. What kind of hard feelings were left, either difficulties in the press where we showed up or portrayed as inappropriately sharing information, or whatever, among the peoples or groups that represent people who felt they were victimized by this.**

Hagan: No, you might find something in the advisory committee proceedings.

Pemberton: **Apparently, one issue of the advisory committee proceedings for the Spanish language Advisory Committee from 1976 to 1980 is missing. So we have been scurrying around the Bureau trying to find these things.**

Hovland: **Someone borrowed the copy of the proceedings and never brought it back is what I suspect.**

Hagan: If that had happened, I'm sure Vilma Martinez, who headed up that Committee at that time would be right on us. She wouldn't blame us, but she would want it imprinted on our minds that it happened and that we should talk to INS and do all these things. Vilma Martinez a worthy opponent. Did Levine have any recollection of this?

Pemberton: **We interviewed Dan Levine in October.**

Hovland: **We could give him a call.**

Hagan: Of course, if Kaplan was alive, you could get chapter and verse. Who else? Sherry Courtland?

Pemberton: **She's retired now.**

Hagan: Wasn't she special assistant to Dave for a while?

Pemberton: **I think so. She's the person with whom I did the interview with Vince Barabba a long time ago.**

Hagan: I do remember the incident. How about files in the Public Information Office? Have you asked them to look this up?

Pemberton: **They have been asked, but I'm not sure what they have come up with.**

Hagan: I'm sure Morry Cagle's [Eugene M. Cagle, Assistant Division Chief, Public Information Office, from January 1976] gone.

Pemberton: **Oh no, he is in the Public Information Office. Are there any other recollections or points that you would like to make either about your career at the Bureau or your perceptions of the Bureau since having left it? Have you made contact with colleagues and/or friends that you made at the Bureau since retirement?**

Hagan: Several of us, after our retirement, formed a little company; but, we weren't a raving success. George Hall [George E. Hall, Associate Director for Demographic Fields, from July 1979 to May 1981], Dan Levine, Jim Turbitt, and I formed a company called CENEX which we defined as "Census Expertise." We asked Shirley to join us, but she passed away before that could be done. We lasted about 3 years and kind of gave up. We made expenses and a little income. It was a fun time, and we stayed together. Occasionally George, Dan, and I get together for lunch, but I'm a little remiss in not initiating. Otherwise, I see Bill Fay. I visited him in Florida about 6 weeks ago. I see others, but not on a large scale. I don't really keep in touch with any of the directors. I haven't really established contact with Martha Riche [Director, November 1994 to January 1998] or her predecessor. I met Barbara Bryant, and I have had some contact with Jack Keane [John G. Keane, Director, from March 1984 to January 1989]. Jack and I had a good feeling for each other, though I didn't work for him. We had a fine relationship and talked a lot. This Travis, Texas, thing brought to mind the work the Bureau has to do to convince people that what we collect in the way of information can't be used against them. My early object lesson was as an enumerator. After I finished the veteran housing survey, I went on to work on the Current Population Survey, and I either did original interviews or re-interviews. It's very difficult for our people to work around these suspicions and problems. I remember interviewing a family during the Current Population Survey, making up the control card the first time, listing all the residents and

their ages, and using that for the next 5 or 6 months. It wasn't unusual in some of the poorer neighborhoods, where aid to dependent children and other subsidies were available, to go back 1 month or maybe 2 months later, recognize the lady that answered the door, ask for Mrs. So 'n' So and have her say, "oh, no they're gone." Then you explained the survey, and you make up control card number two. You said, "I need to get a listing of everybody that lives here." You got the same first names but different last names, same ages, and clearly the same family and here you have a dilemma. Do I tell the Bureau that this is really a change in the household, or do I say that they are lying to me? How do I communicate that? How does this influence statistical tabulations? You also knew there were residents in the household that never got listed. I was interviewing this lady one time and this fellow came in carry great big bags of groceries and walked right in the house and into the kitchen. I said, "maybe I missed somebody. Does he live here?" "Oh no, he's just a powerful good friend." You knew damn good and well he lived there but the threat of losing their income, or whatever they were getting, wasn't worth being honest. This went on and on and on. That was in 1946 and I know it's been going on every since.

Pemberton: **The suspicion of the Federal Government has increased dramatically since 1946.**

Hagan: Yes it has, but I think it has always existed. Various things bring it up again but certainly the immigration sweeps [has an impact]. I don't know what you do about that except through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) or some interagency function that could sensitize people to that problem. I mean sensitize the other agencies to that problem.

Pemberton: **I think that's precisely what Dr. Riche was trying to do.**

Hagan: You have to do that. It's unfortunate that you have to control your activities to correspond with another agency's activities, but I think for the good of the Federal Government it should be done.

Pemberton: **It can't be announced in that sense.**

Hagan: No, no it has to be informal. Without telling the INS field officer you can't go in there because the Census Bureau has just been there. Somehow in the review of plans and things, you have to fold in these facts. It may not be possible to do.

Pemberton: **But you have to keep trying.**

Hovland: **It might require a coordination among agencies that in the current organization is virtually impossible. I was not surprised about the story of the Texas sweep because I doubt the INS paid any attention to what the Census Bureau was doing.**

Hagan: No, I don't think they did, and they didn't have any reason to, if they hadn't been alerted to the fall out from that. They wouldn't understand it unless somebody explained it to them.

Pemberton: **And brought it to their attention. I think of course you get turn-over in personnel at that agency like any other agency; so, it has to periodically be brought to their attention.**

Hagan: I think it goes back to this business that Ted Clemence used to talk about—how important the institutional memory is in organizations. You remember the scars and battles you had.

Pemberton: **Actually, the multiplication of the advisory committee's took place in the mid-1970s. Now to some extent, there were additions and to some extent there were some subtractions.**

Hovland: **I arrived at the Bureau in 1975, and when I got here the Bureau had 12 advisory committee's including a just established ad hoc Committee for Asians and Pacific Islanders.**

Hagan: That was the most difficult committee to deal with. The Asians and Pacific Islanders.

Hovland: **I do remember during that meeting there were some rather hard words exchanged between Mr. Barabba and the acting chairperson.**

Hagan: We had some rough exchanges. I don't think I have many minority committee pictures. Oh, here's one. Here is the Asian and Pacific Islander group; Albert Yee the chairperson.

Hovland: **Dr. Yee was the permanent chairperson after they became a permanent committee.**

Hagan: He could be quite aggressive. Dave Kaplan doesn't look very happy and neither do I.

Pemberton: **One of the things that was interesting in our interview with both Mr. Barabba and Mr. Levine, especially with Mr. Barabba, was that he indicated that he had a thick skin, and he thought that the Census Bureau had the advantage of being physically removed from downtown Washington. Until the mid to late 1960s, it was under intense, heavy scrutiny either from the Department of Commerce or from Congress. As the 1980 census approached and the budget request increased, they paid more attention to the Bureau. One of Barabba's advantages as a Director was that he had a thick skin and was able and wanted to hear what people had to say and who was willing to listen. He felt the career people at the Bureau would take many of these comments as personal attacks, attacks on professionals, attacks on a desire to get the job done efficiently, professionally, accurately, and as quickly as possible. As Mr. Kaplan in that picture might divulge, the folks would take these things personally. Mr. Barabba's advantage was that he would take them to some extent personally but was able to listen to them.**

Hagan: His involvement at the Bureau wasn't life long. He just walked in as an appointee a year ago or 6 months ago or whatever. He could say well I wasn't here when they did that, and that gave him a different perspective. He wasn't challenged personally on his professional skills, but he was there to mediate between the advisory committee members and the Bureau's professionals who thought they did the best dam job that they could under the circumstances. They thought "who were these characters? What credentials did they have?" The committees brought little knowledge to speak of. About a third of them had enough understanding of what the Bureau was trying to do. But the others simply wanted to get something done; they were activists. At best, working with those kinds of people is tough. I used to come out of those advisory committee meetings feeling totally drained.

Pemberton: **The History Staff still writes the minutes for those committee meetings, and we come out of them drained too.**

Hagan: You smile when you want to say, "go to hell."

Pemberton: **It's very difficult. This is the advantage of the politician, as you said. The politician does not have to support the last 10 years of the agencies operation.**

Hagan: Barabba may think it's unique to him but it isn't. I think its a plus; it brings a different perspective, and I don't resent it; it's just different. Some people handle it better than others. Plotkin was too sensitive; he got confused by the interchange

between seeing Albert Yee and Dave Kaplan and others. Albert Yee and other Committee members would say, "why don't you do this; why don't you do that?" "I want 19 classifications on your race form," and Dave Kaplan would patiently try to explain why and what was possible and what wasn't. Manny Plotkin didn't relate to that to well, but Vince did. He was much quicker on the uptake. Plus, he took advantage of his lack of a life-long commitment to the Bureau. He was truly a Bureau supporter, no doubt about that. I think that's unique to directors who come from the outside. Some make more use of it than others.

Pemberton: **There seems to be a great deal of agreement that the folks you worked with on the executive staff were as you said, "among the best the Bureau ever had." Among current people, they continue to point to that group.**

Hagan: They were certainly a great group. In addition to being working colleagues, we were also pretty good friends. It was a fine experience, and I don't regret it.

Pemberton: **That's good. I think we have come to the end of the interview. I want to thank you on behalf of the History Staff and the Bureau for having submitted to it.**